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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates how the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma is exploring a new paradigm of evaluation that is responsive to the claims, concerns, and issues of stakeholders involved. Known as culturally responsive evaluation, this alternative conceived by the Initiative for Culturally Responsive Evaluation (ICRE) is considered more appropriate than conventional methods for evaluating language revitalization efforts, because it is respectful of the dignity, integrity, and privacy of stakeholders in that it allows for their full participation, parity, and control. CRE is an open-ended, inductive approach in which the impact of the program being evaluated is discovered empirically rather than mechanistically. The Cherokee immersion team members created the Cherokee First Immersion Center for preschool children. They believe that such an approach, more than its conventional counterpart, is appropriate for both evaluating and enhancing the Cherokee Immersion Preschool Center and that it meets the ICRE's call for evaluators to recognize the legitimacy of diverse cultural patterns and perspectives, develop awareness of their own values and perspectives, accept children's culturally conditioned behavior without evaluating it as wrong, and develop a sense of security about evaluation with ethnically diverse populations. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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# Assessing the Impact of Total Immersion on Cherokee Language Revitalization: A Culturally Responsive, Participatory Approach

Lizette Peter with Ella Christie, Marilyn Cochran, Dora Dunn, Lula Elk, Ed Fields, JoAnn Fields, Tracy Hirata-Edds, Anna Huckaby, Margaret Raymond, Deputy Chief Hastings Shade, Gloria Sly, George Wickliffe, Akira Yamamoto

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Attempts to measure the effectiveness of language maintenance and revitalization efforts have been slow to follow the emergence of these programs, for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, the knowledge that the results can yield politically, socially, or economically significant consequences may steer groups away from any kind of systematic attempt at program evaluation. Or, there may be a general mistrust in the ability of formal measurements to convey all that can and needs to be said about the qualities of a given language revival program. On the other hand, communities that are successful in mobilizing the much needed resources to launch a program are sometimes less concerned with the end results than with the day to day implementation of their plan, which can often be challenging enough. To some, the fact that the program ever got off the ground in the first place may be enough evidence of success.

But, given this dearth of formal program evaluations, how are we to know if children are successfully learning heritage languages in school programs, immersion centers and camps, or language nests? And, how are we to know if revitalization efforts have resulted in an increase in the number of contexts in which the heritage language is used? In short, how are we to know if endangered languages have any hope of being transmitted to younger generations? In order to answer these questions, program objectives, processes, and outcomes *must* be assessed. But this does not mean that communities need to hire outside evaluation experts, spend enormous amounts of time and money on surveys and language test development, learn how to collect data and write statistical reports, or be subjected to evaluation procedures that focus on things deemed unimportant to the community, while neglecting to consider elements the community deems integral to their lives.

This paper illustrates how one group, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is exploring a new paradigm of evaluation that is responsive to the claims, concerns, and issues of the stakeholders involved. Known as Culturally Responsive Evaluation, this alternative conceived by the Initiative for Culturally Responsive Evaluation (ICRE) is more appropriate than conventional models for evaluating language revitalization efforts because it is respectful of the dignity, integrity, and privacy of the stakeholders in that it allows for their full participation, parity, and control. And, because the course of action is negotiated and honors the diversity of values and opinions among the stakeholders, individuals are more likely not only to have reason to support it, but to be satisfied with the outcome as well.

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**The case of the Cherokee Nation**

Currently, the Cherokee Nation in northeast Oklahoma enjoys strong tribal administrative support of programs designed to preserve and revive the Cherokee language, and about 25 beginning language classes have been implemented that serve approximately 400 community members. High school 'Cherokee as a Foreign Language' classes have been established, and have served over 300 students. Additionally, a Cherokee language curriculum has been developed and is constantly being updated to provide schools within the 14-county jurisidictional area materials to teach the Cherokee language to students. And most recently, the Cherokee Nation began work in earnest to plan and implement its very first full Cherokee language immersion preschool that opened on August 13, 2001.

To the Cherokee, language revitalization is an act of self-determination and of cultural and linguistic empowerment. By providing an opportunity for children to become bilingual in Cherokee and English, the Cherokee Nation is taking steps not only toward recognizing the basic human right of linguistic freedom, but acting on it as well. But the Cherokee realize that a truly empowering language revitalization program engenders participant engagement through both pedagogical *and* evaluative processes, and so any language program that promotes cultural empowerment must also include an equally empowering plan for assessment and evaluation. Hence, as part of their planning for a Cherokee language full-immersion preschool, the Cherokee Nation has also engaged participants in envisioning a culturally responsive model of assessment and evaluation. The final result of this ongoing process will be the emergence of a holistic evaluation/assessment instrument that is respectful of the dignity and integrity of all who have a stake in the results of such an inquiry.

The Immersion Team established to develop and carry out the goals and planning of the Preschool Immersion Center is comprised of a talented and caring group of individuals dedicated to the reversal of language loss among the Cherokee people. Under the leadership of Dr. Gloria Sly, the Interim Director of Language and Cultural Affairs for the Cherokee Nation, the Team has spent innumerable hours envisioning immersion, planning for the reality, and implementing that plan toward realistic and attainable goals. Team members from the Cherokee Nation include Deputy Chief Hastings Shade, Marilyn Cochran, Ed Fields, Anna Huckaby, George Wickliffe, and teachers Ella Christie, Dora Dunn, Lula Elk, and JoAnn Fields. Several University of Kansas team members have also been involved in the program throughout its planning and first year of implementation. Lizette Peter, who holds a Ph.D. in education with an emphasis in second language learning and ethnolinguistics, serves as an evaluation facilitator by guiding the participants of the project through the evaluation model we have already begun to develop. Tracy Hirata-Edds, a doctoral student in child language acquisition, is assisting with the language assessment component, working with the team to develop oral assessment tools in English and in Cherokee that are responsive to the needs of the participants of the Preschool Immersion Center. And Akira Yamamoto, professor of linguistics and anthropology, continues to provide his expertise and support in all aspects of the program.

As partners in the Immersion Team, the University of Kansas members are committed to maintaining the integrity of a collaborative partnership with the Cherokee Nation. This commitment means that while their university affiliation obliges them to engage in scholarly work, sensitivity toward their Cherokee partners' wishes and needs is indeed a priority, and so any scholarly work resulting from the project must meet with the approval of all the members of the team. The evaluation model that emerges from the work of the Immersion Team by its very nature ensures that no one person's subjective constructions of the Preschool Immersion Program become the sole source of findings or the single point of view reflected in the final reporting. They have strived for a *joint* construction that includes as many viewpoints as possible in the construction of evaluation tools, in the collection of data, and in member checks that allow for individual participants to judge the overall adequacy of the information collected.

**The framework of culturally responsive evaluation**

Culturally Responsive Evaluation has its roots in critical theory, naturalistic inquiry, anthropology, ethnolinguistics, bilingual advocacy, and multicultural education. It challenges more 'conventional' types of evaluation characterized by an over-dependence on formal quantitative measurement, a dyadic separation between the researcher/evaluator and the subject of evaluation, a preoccupation with "value-free" objectivity, and the underlying belief in ability to tease-out "truth." Proponents of a culturally responsive paradigm view this conventional approach to evaluation and research as inherently reductionist, and, as a result, coercive in its practical implications. Their search is for a new paradigm of research and evaluation, one with participatory and emancipatory goals in which the evaluator moves from the role of controller to that of collaborator.

A substantial literature exists in the educational and social sciences offering a critique of conventional modes of research, evaluation, and assessment in both theory and practice. Since its early conception with Jürgen Habermas (1968, 1984) and the Frankfurt School and furthered by the work of prominent thinkers representing a wide range of disciplines, such as Michel Foucault (1972, 1969), Paulo Freire (1971), Stephen Jay Gould (1996), and Elliot Eisner (1979), this criticism shares a common conviction that the scientific paradigm is ill-equipped as a model to adequately describe the complexities of human nature. The more favored alternatives are models such as Culturally Responsive Evaluation that fully consider and take advantage of the local constructions of reality in their planning and implementation. Lincoln and Guba, for example, advocate what they call "Fourth Generation Evaluation," an approach that has emerged as an alternative to the positivist paradigm with consequences "startlingly different from those we have come to expect from scientific inquiry" (1989, p. 44).

Multicultural literature, especially that which pertains to Native Americans, provides another source of criticism in response to years of "top-down" approaches designed to resolve so-called Native issues. Dementi-Leonard and Gilmore (1999), as a case in point, describe the plight of rural Native Alaskans

who only recently have begun to undo years of top-down mandates that have left them no better off than they were prior to any intervention. Through grassroots community initiative and autonomy, however, the Athabascan language preservation project in Western Interior Alaska has met with much success in that the project has "recognized the significance of native ownership and control and facilitated a process that would preserve the integrity of that principle" (1999, p. 44). Certainly, this grassroots approach is a new experience for many communities more accustomed to the top-down efforts of non-natives and outsiders. But once community members overcome their initial frustration of chipping away at decades of hegemonic practices, participants involved in indigenous language revitalization are beginning to see that community-led language and cultural revitalization activities have the ability to renew a sense of pride, cultural identity, and self-determination.

The model being implemented by the Cherokee Nation starts from these premises and engages in the paradigm search by employing as its conceptual framework a "constructivist" method with a responsive focus that, in the words of Lincoln and Guba,

> recognizes the constructed nature of findings, that takes different values and different contexts (physical, psychological, social, and cultural) into account, that empowers and enfranchises, that fuses the act of evaluation and its follow-up activities into one indistinguishable whole, and that is fully participative in that it extends both political and conceptual parity to all stakeholders. (1989, p. 11)

Toward these ends, the University of Kansas members who have joined the Cherokee Cultural Resource Center Staff and immersion preschool teachers to form the "Immersion Team" are "subjective partners" in the creation of a consensual construction among stakeholders.

Given the framework outlined above, the Cherokee Immersion Team has begun to see evaluation in a new light. Rather than think of evaluation in negative terms, as something that is done to us for the sake of exposing weaknesses, the Team finds that it is more productive to use evaluation as a way to give "value" to (or, if there were the word, to *envalue*) whatever it is that is observed—both positive and negative—about the Preschool Immersion Program. In this approach, evaluation is something not done to them, but rather *by* them, *with* them, and *for* them. Such a culturally responsive, participatory model of evaluation has the following characteristics:

1. **It is ongoing.** It starts at the beginning, from the initial planning, and continues daily until the end of the program year or cycle.
2. **It takes many forms**. Evaluation tools might be interviews, discussions, observations, surveys, self-reflections in daily journals, progress assessments, or any combination of these things.

3. **It is inclusive.** It includes the perspectives of all the *stakeholders*, meaning anyone who has something to be gained by the program.
4. **It is culturally responsive.** It is sensitive to the values and traditions of the Cherokee People because it originates from the reflections, observations, and perspectives of those who are most intimately involved in the process. It responds, therefore, to their needs, issues, and concerns—not to those of someone from outside the group of stakeholders.
5. **It is useful.** Even things that do not work well are valued because of the ability to learn from mistakes and make them right. Only by honestly reflecting on perceived problems individually and as a group can those problems be remedied to build a stronger foundation for the future.
6. **It is thorough.** It takes into account the *whole* picture. Every aspect of the program, from the moment of conception to the end of the year, presents at least one indicator of success that nees to be observed, explored, and given value to.

**The culturally responsive evaluation process**

The Cherokee Immersion Team has been engaged in an evaluation process that combines elements from the "Fourth Generation Evaluation" model developed by Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba (1989) and "Empowerment Evaluation" techniques developed by David Fetterman (2001). What makes the design truly unique, however, is that it has been shaped by the Cherokee themselves, and christened *I-di-go-li-ya-he Ni-da-duh-na-hu-i*, or "Let's take a look at what we are doing." The steps that the Immersion Team has developed are as follows:

1. **Identify the stakeholders**. Stakeholders are anyone who has either something to gain or to lose as a result of the program, and whose perspectives must therefore be taken into consideration. The premise taken in a culturally responsive approach is that evaluation can never be conducted by one person working in isolation. Through their involvement in the evaluation process, stakeholders are empowered and are more likely to respond positively to the outcomes.
2. **Develop a mission, vision, or unifying purpose**. This entails involving an identified cross-section of the stakeholders in the generation of key phrases that capture the vision or mission of the program. It is likely that, as the progress is made, the mission will evolve to better reflect the reality of the situation. This is a natural and necessary part of the process, and so participants should be encouraged to refer to the mission regularly and assess its merits.
3. **Take stock**. This involves generating a list of the key activities that the stakeholders see as crucial to the functioning of the program. Ideally, the result will be a comprehensive list that can be organized into specific categories and used as the basis for future discussions about what is and is not working. The more comprehensive the list, the more likely the source of problems can identified, and targeted for improvement.

4. **Develop stakeholder perspectives**. At this stage, a cross-section of the stakeholders is interviewed to get their impressions on the key activities that were listed in step 3, above. In a culturally responsive approach, the interviewer strives to avoid tainting the interview process with his or her own biases. As such, interviews should be as loosely structured as appropriate so that the individual stakeholder has more control over the topics and issues discussed, allowing for his or her true feelings to come through. At the end of the interview, the notes are carefully checked with the interviewee for accuracy, and as a means to get further elaboration on the issues that he or she raised.
5. **Check and enlarge stakeholder perspectives**. The purpose of this stage is to introduce other information that could raise the stakeholders' constructions to a higher level. That information might include notes made during observations of program activities, issues, perspectives, and concerns raised during the interviews, professional literature regarding second language acquisition and the like, results of language proficiency screening, and new ideas generated from visits made to other Native American language immersion sites.
6. **Negotiate**. This is a crucial part of the empowerment process as it allows for open discussion in the spirit of mutual empowerment, leading to a final product that all can agree represents a valid description and analysis of the situation. With an identified cross-section of stakeholders together in one room, the perspectives generated in steps 4 and 5 are brought to the table for the development of a consensus on the key aspects listed in step 3. While this stage is best accomplished in a forum with a cross-section of the stakeholders present, care must be taken to ensure anonymity of participants who may have shared their ideas and concerns during the interview stage. The goal is for a productive sharing of ideas that fosters the broadening of perspectives, not to pit one idea against another and alienate individuals who may see things differently.
7. **Report**. Once a joint perspective is ratified in step 6, the group must decide on a mode of reporting that will best reflect the outcome of the evaluation while meeting any program requirements (such as dictated by the primary funding and supporting agency, for example, or themselves, if it is their own initiative). While one person may be designated with the job of writing the report, each member checks and ratifies it when it meets their satisfaction.
8. **Plan for the future**. It is not enough to come to a consensus on the strengths and weaknesses of a language revitalization program; there must also be a realistic plan for improvement before the next cycle begins. At this stage, goals may be refined that take into consideration the conditions, motivation, resources, and dynamics of the program as presented in the report. Participants must also select and develop strategies to accomplish these newly set goals.
9. **Share the results with others**. The Indigenous Languages Institute (ILI) formed in 1997 has identified as one of its major tasks the gathering of information on strategies that work and on challenges in establishing an effective

community language program (Linn et al., 2000). Without sufficient information on what is being done by various communities to revitalize their languages and whether they have met with success in their efforts or not, new programs being launched in other parts of the country, in essence, must reinvent the wheel.

**Sources of documentation**

The best illustration of the process described above comes from the Cherokee initiative, exemplified in the activities the Cherokee Immersion Team has included as part of the planning and implementation of their total immersion preschool (see Peter 2003 for a detailed description). During the eight months of planning time prior to the opening of the Immersion Preschool, the Immersion Team met regularly to engage in discussions about language learning, participate in language immersion demonstrations, practice introducing concepts through immersion techniques, and develop lessons and materials suitable for three-year old learners. In addition, the Team began giving shape and value to their efforts through a culturally responsive evaluation process that included the documentation of perceptions, issues, and concerns at the onset.

The team began with an "Envisioning Immersion" exercise that challenged them to create the ideal Cherokee Language immersion preschool, describing the extent of their imaginations without constraints of any kind. The result was a six-page document (included at the end of this article) that has since served as the group's unifying purpose, to which it refers regularly as the "reality" of the preschool evolves. At a later meeting, the Immersion Team identified the stakeholders in the immersion preschool project to include parents, teachers, students, Immersion Team members, and the Cherokee Nation community. Since the Team feels that these are people who have some connection to the project, we agreed it will be important to document their perspectives as the first year of the project progresses. The Team also spent a large part of one afternoon listing all the elements we found key to the workings of the Immersion Preschool. The extensive list they generated reflects the wide range of elements that have an impact on the success of the overall program, and that need to be considered as part of an ongoing program evaluation. They call these aspects "indicators of success" because the overall success of the Immersion Preschool depends on the strength of each of its integral parts. The indicators generated comprise the following categories:

<u>Planning:</u>

how much progress is made
how much learning takes place
how sufficient it is
how well it prepares us for the next step
how inclusive it is
how well it incorporates everyone's point of view

Training of Teachers:
- how well it meets the teachers' expectations
- how satisfied the teachers are with it
- how well it prepares the teachers to meet the challenges of the classroom
- how consistent it is
- how well it is attended
- how timely it is

Immersion Team
- how much input is given according to individual styles
- how satisfied they are with the progress of the program in meeting the goals they set
- how involved they are according to their individual capabilities
- how well they endorse the program
- how well they cooperate and use teamwork to get tasks completed

Immersion Preschool Teachers
- how much enthusiasm and pride they have in their work
- how dedicated they are to the program
- how patient they are with the children and themselves
- how much they use Cherokee both in and out of the classroom
- how much they feel supported and assisted by the immersion team, the parents, and the Cherokee Nation
- how satisfied they are with: materials, classroom environment, progress of their students, their own teaching abilities, the hours of work they put in every day, the respect they get from others for the special work that they do, their emotional state, the training they receive, and the expectations set for them and their students

Caretakers/Parents
- how satisfied they are with their child's development
- how involved they are in their child's learning, both in the classroom and at home
- how enthusiastic they are in endorsing the program
- how satisfied they are with the quality and quantity of orientation they were provided
- how satisfied they are with the communication they receive from their child's teachers about upcoming events
- how much they learn about Cherokee language and culture
- how much they participate in the center activities
- how much they participate in children's language and culture development outside the center

Children
- how well they can understand and converse with others in Cherokee
- how well they identify with Cherokee culture
- how much their English continues to develop outside of the classroom as their bilingual skills grow
- how well they develop: social skills, motor skills, cognition, emotion

Parent Language Teachers (those who work with parents on Cherokee language learning)

- how much progress parents make in Cherokee as a result of their teaching
- how much enthusiasm and pride they have in their work
- how dedicated they are to the program
- how patient they are with their students and themselves
- how much they use Cherokee both in and out of the classroom
- how much they feel supported and assisted by the immersion team, the parents, and the Cherokee Nation
- how satisfied they are with: materials, classroom environment,progress of their students, their own teaching abilities, the hours of work they put in every day, the respect they get from others for the special work that they do, their emotional state, the training they receive, the expectations set for them and their students

The Cherokee Nation (CN)

- how satisfied CN officials and community members are with the program processes and results
- how much interest CN officials and community members have in the success of the program
- how much they demonstrate interest in and knowledge of the state of the Cherokee language and the need for language revitalization efforts
- how much support they provide the language immersion team in their efforts

Places for Language

- how the contexts for language use outside of the classroom expand

The Center

- how well organized it is
- how suitable it is for our needs in terms of space, conditions, structure, etc.

The Evaluation Process Itself

- how effective it is in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the program and the degree to which it is ongoing, variable, inclusive, culturally responsive, useful, **and** thorough.

Collecting the perspectives of stakeholders (Stage 4) on each of the above indicators throughout the course of the Immersion Preschool's first year required consistent and continuous documentation, observation, discussion, and self-reflection, as well as a considerable commitment on the part of the Immersion Team to the goals of the program. Toward these ends, the Team took part in several loosely structured "surveys," and one more formal questionnaire during the planning stage of the program. These activities were intended to allow Team members to express their concerns in both open-forum and anonymous formats, a triangulation of methods designed to arouse different kinds of responses.

For example, after one 3-day work session, Team members were asked to respond anonymously to a written survey that included such questions as: "What do you see as potential challenges to implementing the immersion plan that we

have all developed so far?" and "What do you think needs to happen between now and August 13th to get ready for the first day of class?" The written format gave the members the opportunity to have time to reflect on their own perspectives, without being biased by other Team members' opinions. And, the anonymity of the exercise allowed for more honest and heartfelt responses than we may have otherwise obtained.

In contrast, at a much later work session, Team members were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, their feelings about questions regarding their preparedness for the opening day of the center, such as: "How prepared are we to teach all in Cherokee?" "How prepared are we to develop appropriate materials?" "How prepared are we to make the preschool fun and engaging?" "How prepared are we to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing program?" Conducted in an open forum, this exercise instilled a great deal of enthusiasm in the group as each team member reported that they felt overwhelmingly confident on every one of the indicators.

The Immersion Team made even further progress in developing stakeholder perspectives by asking a cross-section of stakeholders to attend Friday morning planning meetings (the Immersion Preschool operates Monday-Thursday, giving Friday for reflection and planning). Using the key indicators as a point of departure, they use this valuable time together to view videotapes made during the week of the classroom activities and share experiences with immersion techniques and observations of the children.

At the time of this writing, then, the Cherokee Immersion Team finds itself well into Stage Four of its evaluation process. They will be in this stage for a couple of months, as new experiences emerge and their discussion evolves. Collaboration on an ongoing evaluation of the Immersion Preschool has entailed opportunities for the KU members to join the Cherokee team members in the construction and administering of evaluation tools such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and assessments. KU members are responsible for entering the data, and providing written updates on the results to all team members for their perusal and approval. But in the end, the entire Team will collaborate on the final report, which will be an extensive description of every aspect of the program from the perspectives of all the stakeholders. All Team members will have joint ownership of the data collected and the reports that are written. The ultimate goal will be the development of an evaluation tool uniquely suited to the needs of the Cherokee Nation, one that can be replicated for a variety of contexts within their language revitalization projects. And, in the final stage, the hope is that the Cherokee Nation's experience with their full Immersion Preschool will be widely shared with other Native communities seeking to revitalize their languages, as a model to be adapted to other equally unique situations.

**Conclusion**

Culturally Responsive Evaluation is an open-ended, inductive approach in which the impact of the program being evaluated is discovered empirically rather than mechanistically. The Cherokee Immersion Team members believe that such

an approach, more than its conventional counterpart, is appropriate for both evaluating and enhancing the Cherokee Immersion Preschool Center, and that it meets the Initiative for Culturally Responsive Evaluation's call for evaluators to,

> recognize the legitimacy of diverse cultural patterns and perspectives...develop awareness of their own values and perspectives, accept children's culturally conditioned behavior without evaluating it as wrong, and develop a sense of security about evaluation with ethnically diverse populations. (Pewewardy 1997, p. 5)

From the outset, the Cherokee Immersion Team has recognized and taken advantage of the important role of community initiative, autonomy and ownership in the success of language preservation projects, and has facilitated a process that would preserve the integrity of that principle. Throughout the rest of the inaugural year, the Immersion Team will continue to refine this evaluation tool, making it not only an efficient and effective way to evaluate all future language revitalization activities, but one that is uniquely Cherokee as well.

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# Appendix

## Envisioning Immersion Planning Workshop

The ultimate goal of the Center is for the children to acquire the Cherokee language in such a way that it will become an integral part of their lives and their knowledge about the world around them. The Center will have seventeen 3-year-old children as its first students with four immersion teachers (one lead teacher and three assistants). The Center will be located in one of the rooms at the present CDC/Headstart Center.

The scope of the Cherokee First Immersion Center has been further refined. The goal of the Center is to teach the Cherokee Language by doing things with the children in the language so that they can interact with people around them in Cherokee. The children will also be able to recognize the Cherokee Syllabary.

Since the Center is the place for Cherokee, it will integrate the traditional and contemporary cultures so that children will be full-fledged Cherokee. The first thing we will prepare for children is to identify who may have Cherokee names and who may not. We will find out the appropriate way to find names for those who do not have one, who and how we give new Cherokee names. For those who already have Cherokee names, we should find a way to incorporate their names in this "naming ceremony." This should be the official and exciting way of opening the Center each year! **AND we will do this in all Cherokee in the Cherokee way!** We need to think of other ceremonial occasions for the Center. It is always good to have several of these occasions to invite caretakers, tribal leaders, teachers from the Preschool Complex, the tribal people, and all kinds of people.

In order to achieve these goals, the Center will have the following resources:

**I. Equipped classroom with:**

- one large room with a large TV screen, video player, tape recorder, computer with internet connection, screen, slide projector, computer projector, a miniature stage (setting up activity centers)
- each center will be equipped with toys, books, blocks, etc.
- one section with tables and chairs
- one section carpeted for sitting around (different colors, different patterns, seasonally changed)
- one section traditional house style with traditional items (this is a possible place for napping)
- one section for changing diapers (?), clothes (several changes for each child): this section should have towels, soaps, first-aid kits, shelves and drawers)
- one cupboard for cups, bottles, napkins, spoons, forks, etc.
- one section (partitioned?) for teachers to rest and prepare: computer, internet connection, telephone, copying machine, slide projector, video player, camcorder,

- low sinks
- toilets for children to be able to use by themselves

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**II. Budget**

The budget needs to be based on local needs and resources.

***Which of elements are unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**III. Planning**

Planning must continue based on evaluation of what has been implemented and how effective it has been. This entails:

- planning: with the Resource Center staff, Immersion Team, teachers, and, later, children's care takers
- plans must be shaped so that the Resource Center staff and teachers can actually carry out their parts
- in this process at all levels, evaluation must be on-going [evaluation procedure and instrument must be developed—this will be a part of the May Seminar. See below for "evaluation"]

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**IV. Curriculum**

A. Goals: Speaking/Recognition of Syllabary: The students will be able to communicate with teachers, classmates, and other persons in Cherokee. This means that they will be able to perform the following acts:

1. Naming: orally identify the following. The range of vocabulary and expressions need to be identified. These should not be a simple word list. They must be presented in a context in which children feel comfortabl (See VI below): clothes, shapes, size, relatives, body parts, animals, numbers, colors, transportation, classroom objects, food and drink, and bathroom and personal hygiene
2. Expressing Needs: Need to think of what language is needed here and produce creative materials.
    a. psychological conditions: feelings
    b. physical and health conditions: sick, pain, hot, cold, etc.
3. Conversation/Interaction: children. What are the routine expressions that should be used in classrooms and playground? "Good morning," "My, you look pretty this morning," "Are you OK?," "Good," "Beautiful," "Nice," "What's the matter?," "Where does it hurt?," "Let's go outside,"

"Nap time," "Snack time," etc. This includes asking questions, request/response, negotiation & sharing, greeting & leave taking, following directions, personal hygiene, and turn taking

B. Evaluation: Evaluation is an integral part of planning, modifying, expanding, and any changes that may be made. It is also important to show the effectiveness of the Center to parents, caretakers, tribal administrators, and to the people in general. Evaluation should extend to the overall program, curriculum, materials, language, methods, and parents' and caretakers participation.

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**V. Language environment: When the caretakers come to the Center, one step inside the Center,**

A. No English!!! (This is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for teachers, although it sounds simple enough. In order to show that this can be done, the Cultural Resource staff need to "speak Cherokee" at their work place, yes, that is where things begin! See E below.). Cherokee needs to be spoken between teachers, between teachers and children, between teachers and visitors, between children and visitors, between teachers, students, and any other staff, between children

B. Learning Centers: Need to prepare the place and the environment for these centers. (See above #1)

C. Abundant Resources

1. Materials: learners need to be surrounded by "good" materials. The Resource staff need to be producing as many of the following as possible. Remember that these resources derive from the curriculum and lessons. Resources should include books, visuals, tapes, multimedia, realia, and things from the environment.
2. Human resources: the Cultural Resource Staff and the Immersion Team, all of whom will be participating in the preparation of curriculum, activity plans, materials development, evaluation of the program and of the language development, and training of teachers (and themselves). **There needs to be some formal plan for the smooth working and mutually supporting relationship between teachers, the staff, and the immersion team.**

D. Caretakers need to be a part of the Center activities. They need to continue the language at home. **Remember that this will depend on the curriculum and the activity plan for each week.** There need to be weekly meetings, notes home, audio taped recordings of lesson, and learners of the language

E. Opportunities to Use Cherokee: **The staff and teachers need to demonstrate that Cherokee first is the norm at work place. Can we find any other place for Cherokee? If not, where and how can we create one?**

E. Beyond the Classroom:

1. read and practice the language materials (the staff, teachers, and children themselves need to be producing language materials to take home)
2. in the community (**field trips**), including visits with elders, and trips to dances & cultural events.

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**VI. Children: They are unique with a variety of learning styles and learn best through:**

A. Games & play: including use of manipulatives, pretend play, and traditional games

B. Storytelling/music: including videos, dramatization, puppets, flannel board, oral stories, and stories through music.

C. Hands-On Activities: including arts & crafts, sand box, water table, and playdough.

D. Physical activity: including dance, running, tricyle riding, and exercise.

**Thus, the team, staff, and teachers need to incorporate as many of the above as possible in language development activities.**

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**VII. Teachers, the Cultural Resource Department Staff, and the Immersion Team**

A. Teachers:

1. characteristics: nurturing, caring, enthusiastic, dedicated, willing to try new things, committed to Cherokee language maintenance
2. fluent speaker of Cherokee (required)
3. literate in Cherokee (preferred)
4. certified in Cherokee (preferred)
5. CDA (required)

B. The Staff and the Immersion Team:

We need to be doing continuous evaluation, re-examining the effectiveness of the program, modifying it (program itself, curriculum, lesson plans, activity plans, materials, setting, etc.), and re-evaluating them. **This process itself will be the on-going mutual training of the teachers, the staff, and the immersion team.**

1. May training seminar for the Cultural Resource staff and the immersion team (about two and a half days). The lead teacher will be identified by then and s/he will be a part of the training seminar. The result of this should be a preparation for another training by the staff and the immersion team for the remaining teachers (3 others) — by doing this, we hope

that it will continue to train the staff and the immersion team as well.

2. The staff and the team will continue to develop the curriculum, lesson/activity plans, teaching materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
3. June training seminar (before the summer camp). By then all teachers will be identified and the training seminar will be planned for at least a few days—ideally week-long. This is where the curriculum and activity plans for the summer camp should be completed (especially for K-2). The curriculum and activity plans should be an expanded version of a segment of the Center curriculum.
4. Teachers (the staff and the team) should be able to participate in the summer camp and experiment with the curriculum, activity plans, materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
5. Post-summer camp seminar must be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Based on the experience, refine the curriculum, activity plans, materials, and teaching methods and techniques.
6. By the end of July, complete at least the general layout of the curriculum (what will be taught when and how), detailed curriculum for at least two (2) months, detailed activity plans, notes (and materials) to caretakers, evaluation instruments and procedures, etc. [This is in addition to the physical settings of the Center.] Teachers and the staff should feel comfortable speaking only in Cherokee at their work places!
7. Perhaps, the staff should be prepared to step in when a teacher becomes sick or absent due to some emergency business.

***Which of these elements is unrealistic? How can it be modified to be more realistic?***

**Statements made by representatives of the most endangered languages at the 1994 Native American Language Issues (NALI) conference held in Glorieta, New Mexico.**

Cry those tears of shame out. You have no time to be ashamed, wait or avoid it. You need to go forward and speak. Empowered to become our own experts to learn our language. We must become responsible, No linguist, no universities, no language policies will give your language back. It's up to us.

—Nancy Richardson, Aruk

It's sad to be the last speaker of your language. Please, turn back to your own and learn your language so you won't be alone like me. Go to the young people. Let go of the hate in your hearts. Love and respect yourselves first. Elders please give them courage and they will never be alone. Help our people to understand their identity. We need to publish materials for our people to educate the white people to us and for indigenous people.

—Mary Smith, last speaker of Eyak

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